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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAQ EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE, NOV 16

Classified By: Economic Minister Counselor Charles P. Ries for reasons  
1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki proposed creation of a committee to handle issues related to internally displaced persons at the November 16 Iraq Executive Steering Committee (I-ESC), though he did not specify the committee's structure or purpose. He also noted that the improved security situation in Baghdad has rendered many T-walls, checkpoints and barricades unnecessary, and instructed General Aboud, Commander of the Baghdad Operations Center (BOC), to remove these obstructions, where possible, without jeopardizing security. Minister of Electricity Karim Wahid Al-Hasan reported that his ministry will coordinate with the BOC to eliminate militia control of 27 electricity sub-stations in Baghdad. Ahmed Chalabi proposed the creation of two "emergency" centers to provide essential services in areas of Baghdad that urgently need support, and provided recommended solutions to three health-related problems facing the province. Chalabi and National Security Advisor Muwafak al-Rubeiy explained how corruption undermines the Public Distribution System (PDS). Minister of Oil Husayn Al-Shahristani said that the Ministry of Oil (MoO) will begin November 25 to deliver by railroad one million liters of petroleum products per day from Basrah to Baghdad. Finally, the Prime Minister decided to hasten repairs to the Mosul Road Bridge that crosses the Grand Canal north of Baghdad and ordered workers to stop work on the its temporary replacement. END SUMMARY.

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"No Peace in Baghdad" While Families Remain Displaced  
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¶2. (C) Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki called for a committee to examine issues related to internally displaced persons (IDPs). (NOTE: The Prime Minister did not explain his view of the committee's composition or purpose, or describe how it would relate to other committees currently working on the same issue. At the November 18 I-ESC Deputies meeting, Sayid Jabor of the I-ESC Secretariat gave meeting participants one week to devise solutions to the problems posed by IDP returns to Baghdad. END NOTE.) I-ESC Services Working Group Chairman Ahmed Chalabi stated that there can be no peace in Baghdad while families remain displaced. To illustrate his point, Chalabi described the complex situation for families displaced from the rural Sa'ab Al Bor neighborhood to the central Hurriya neighborhood. Allegedly, militants in Hurriya will not allow IDPs living there return to their homes in Sa'ab Al Bor, because the militants would lose the rent payments they collect from the Sa'ab Al Bor IDPs currently living in Hurriya. The Prime Minister remarked that some of the IDPs from Sa'ab Al Bor who currently reside in Hurriya may wish to stay there since they now live closer to their jobs in the city center.

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Countering Militia Control of Electricity Sub-Stations  
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13. (C) Minister of Electricity Karim Wahid Al-Hasan reported that armed militias maintain control of many power sub-stations in Baghdad. He described the difficulties faced by his crews when they attempt to conduct repair work. "Sometimes," he said, "I have to put up walls just to protect my repair teams." He said that his ministry will coordinate with the Baghdad Operations Center (BOC) to regain control from militias of 27 sub-stations on the Rusafa and Karkh sides of the river.

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Signs of Improved Security: Increase in Traffic  
Jams, Removal of T-Walls and Checkpoints

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14. (C) The Prime Minister said that the improved security situation in Baghdad has obviated the need for many T-walls and barricades. He instructed General Aboud, Commander of the BOC, to use his judgment to balance two competing priorities: maintaining security and easing traffic congestion. Aboud responded that the BOC started November 16 a trial period by removing some of the T-walls surrounding Abu Nuwas Street, a historic market area along the Tigris River in Rusafa district. Aboud said that he hoped to open Abu Nuwas street completely by the end of November. Aboud also informed the Prime Minister that the removal of T-walls and barriers may take time, as the BOC and the Baghdad traffic police have limited access to the equipment required to remove T-walls. The Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Defense asked that the Iraqi Police finish installing the CCTV network in Baghdad before the BOC removes all of the T-walls.

BAGHDAD 00003809 002 OF 003

15. (C) Abud also discussed the removal of checkpoints. By the next I-ESC meeting, he said, the BOC will have a plan in place to remove T-walls, barriers, and checkpoints from 11 main roads in Baghdad. To facilitate the removal of checkpoints throughout the province, the BOC plans to establish a three-tiered classification system for checkpoints, based on the security environment and traffic congestion in the area that each checkpoint currently controls.

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Essential Service Emergency Centers

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16. (C) Chalabi said that his Services Working Group would like to create two "emergency" centers in Karkh and Rusafa, respectively, to provide essential services in areas of Baghdad that urgently need support. Chalabi and Mayor Saber al-Esawi proposed a number of other ideas for improving services, including the return of night-shift maintenance in the city, and the use of trucks and truck drivers available from all ministries to carry out municipal work, instead of the Amanat spending an estimated 2.6 million ID per day to rent trucks and hire private contractors.

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Health Clinics, Life-Saving Drugs, and MoD Hospitals

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17. (C) Chalabi said that his Services Committee developed three health-related recommendations. Firstly, he proposed that the Ministry of Health provide emergency services "around the clock" at 72 clinics in Baghdad by paying employees overtime to keep the clinics open. Secondly, Chalabi cited significant medicine shortages throughout Baghdad, claiming that only 35 percent of life-saving drugs remain available in the province, and blamed corruption for this problem. He proposed, as a solution, that the Ministry of Health adopt a popular United Nations medicine procurement

system. This system could increase transparency and efficiency while reducing corruption, Chalabi claimed. In his final health-related recommendation, Chalabi proposed that the Al Karkh Hospital exclusively serve the armed forces, including all soldiers and police officers employed, respectively, by the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Defense, Chalabi said, would operate the hospital.

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PDS Food Shortages Caused by Corruption  
and Distribution Problems  
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¶8. (C) Chalabi and National Security Advisor Muwafak al-Rubeiy reported that corruption undermines the Public Distribution System (PDS). Rubeiy said that the Ministry of Trade has issued 29 million food ration cards, even though far fewer people currently reside in Iraq; many people living abroad sell their ration cards to local residents, Rubeiy alleged. The PDS also provides sub-standard rations, Chalabi and Rubeiy complained, deriding the goods' low quality. Baghdad residents have begun to raise the issue with members of the Council of Representatives, Rubeiy said. Minister of Trade Abdal Falah Al-Sudani said that distribution rather than supply problems cause food shortages such as rice and wheat. The Prime Minister noted that wealthier Iraqis earning over 700,000 ID should not receive rations. "I don't receive my ration," the Prime Minister said, speculating that someone had stolen his card. "Who is getting my ration?"

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Petroleum Products to Travel by Rail  
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¶9. (C) Minister of Oil Husayn Al-Shahristani said that the Ministry of Oil (MoO) will begin November 25 to deliver by railroad one million liters of petroleum products per day from Basrah to Baghdad. In addition, he said, MoO will fix the rail line from Bayji to Doura by December. Shahristani also reported that the northern areas of Kirkuk and the Kurdish region have already increased their demand for kerosene, due to colder weather. While noting that MoO delivered one million liters of kerosene to Baghdad during the first half of November, Shahristani said that Baghdad will need to receive two million liters per day in the second half of the month.

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Scrap the New Bridge - Repair the Old One  
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¶10. (C) The Prime Minister decided to hasten repairs to the Mosul Road (Highway One) Bridge that crosses the Grand Canal

BAGHDAD 00003809 003 OF 003

north of Baghdad. Because of the strategic significance of the bridge's location, the Amanat and other ministries had begun to install a temporary bridge adjacent to the Mosul Bridge in order to allow traffic flows to continue while workmen repaired it. The temporary bridge, however, had started to restrict the water flow necessary for winter irrigation. The Prime Minister ordered workers to stop building the temporary bridge, remove it, and focus their efforts on rebuilding the original bridge.  
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